Music at Convocation Hall

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Michael Massey, piano
with Eric Buchmann, violin
Virginie Gagné, violin
Charles Pilon, viola
Sheila Laughton, cello

Friday, September 7, 2007
7:15 pm *Pre-Concert Introduction*
by **Michael Massey**
Main floor, Convocation Hall
8:00 pm Concert

Convocation Hall

Arts Building
University of Alberta

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Nikolai Medtner

The Last Great Romantic Pianist - Composer

Michael Massey - piano, - and friends

Program

Bagatelle in G Major, Op. 126, No. 1 — Ludwig van Beethoven
Bagatelle in G Minor, Op. 126, No. 2 — (1770 – 1827)

Nine Fairy Tales (Skazki) — Nikolai Medtner
Fairy Tale in D Minor, Op. 34, No. 4 — (1880 – 1951)
"There lived in the world a poor knight" - A. Pushkin
Fairy Tale in Bb Minor, Op. 20, No. 1
Fairy Tale in A Major, Op. 51, No. 3
Fairy Tale in E Minor, Op. 34, No. 2
"We lost all that was once our own" - F. Tyutchev
Fairy Tale in Eb Major, Op. 26, No. 2
Fairy Tale in C Minor, Op. 42, No. 2 *"Phrygian mode"*
Fairy Tale in F Minor, Op. 42, No. 1 *"Russian"*
Fairy Tale in F# Minor, Op. 51, No. 5
Fairy Tale in C# Minor, Op. 35, No. 4
"Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks" - King Lear

Intermission

Moment Musical in D-Flat Major, Op 16, No 5 — Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873 – 1943)

Piano Quintet, Op. Posth. — Nikolai Medtner
1. Molto placido
2. Andantino con moto (Psalm 24, 11)
3. Allegro vivace

Eric Buchmann, violin
Virginie Gagné, violin
Charles Pilon, viola
Sheila Laughton, cello
Michael Massey, piano

Program Notes
by Melaena Grierson

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)
Although Beethoven is known indisputably as a composer, he was in his early years known primarily as a performer, improviser, and composer for the piano specifically. His compositional style is rooted in the classical thought of composers such as Haydn, with whom he studied, and forms a bridge to the Romantic era where he in his turn exerted great influence over later composers. His music can be divided into periods that roughly correspond with his personal life; in early periods, he mastered and gained control over established styles; the middle period marked the introduction of music in the heroic vein; and the late period saw his most complex and personal innovations, as well as a newfound interest in folk song and melody.

Bagatelles: Opus 126, No. 1 and No. 2 (1825)
Written in Beethoven's final compositional period, these pieces are the first two of a set of six Bagatelles (meaning "trifle"). The first piece in G major, marked Andante con Moto, is a simple melody and accompaniment in 3/4 time which contrasts deliciously with the second piece, Allegro, heard in the tonal minor with a rippling perpetual motion theme in 2/4 time.

Nikolai Medtner (1880 – 1951)
Nikolai Medtner was a Russian-born pianist and composer. Originally a concert pianist, he decided to pursue a career as a composer, and from that point onwards his concert performances primarily showcased his own original compositions. Leaving Russia in 1936, Medtner settled in England, where he spent his time teaching, composing, and recording. Although he had some formal instruction in theory and harmony, Medtner was largely self-taught as a composer. A younger contemporary of Rachmaninoff and Skryabin, he was influenced by a strong Russian spirit, but his compositions also show influences from Western classical music, particularly that of Beethoven.

One of the last of the Romantic composers, Medtner adamantly refuted the new directions in music composition, and his own works respect traditional Romantic boundaries, although with additional progressive rhythmic elements. His compositions clearly show his affinity for the piano: the majority of his works are for solo piano, and all incorporate the instrument in some way.

Skazki **(1905 – 1928)**
The 38 Skazki (literally "tales" in Russian), of which nine are represented here, were composed as individual works over several years. These miniature tone poems are widely varied in character, based on a range of different literary sources such as Goethe, Shakespeare, and Russian folklore. Highly original and idiomatic of Medtner's individual composition style, this collection of personal miniatures showcases Medtner's diversity and represents one of his most significant contributions to the repertoire.

The skazki of Op. 51 (1927) were written immediately after Medtner returned to Paris from a tour of the Soviet Union, and show a strong Russian melodic content. Likewise Op. 41 No. 1 is very Russian in sound, and Op. 35 No. 4 models Rachmaninoff in sweep and fury, yet Op. 26 No. 2 displays a charming elfin folk element with canonic play, and Op. 51 No. 3 offers delicate pedaling effects and imaginative tone painting evocative of Debussy.

***Piano Quintet in C Major,* Posthumous (1949)**
Medtner worked on this opus from 1903 until 1949, and considered it his finest work. The first movement opens with a large introduction, and in the Maestoso section introduces the motif that becomes pivotal to the entire quartet. The second movement was written to Psalm 25 of David, specifically the phrases "For your name's sake, O Lord, you will pardon my guilt, great as it is," and "Look toward me and have pity on me, for I am alone and afflicted". This movement is rooted in the ancient music of the Russian Orthodox Church, with a beautiful and moving melodic style.

The third movement, the Finale, is written in complex sonata form, and is twice as long as the first two movements together. Calling into conflict the first and second musical subjects, Medtner creates a polyphonic battleground that resolves simply into the beautiful melodic line of the coda, featuring the triumphant second theme.

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873 – 1943)
Rachmaninoff's reputation as a pianist was legendary in his own time. Born and raised in Russia, Rachmaninoff left the country shortly after the 1917 Russian Revolution in order to emigrate with his family to the United States, where he increasingly made a living as a performer rather than a composer. Although his compositions are firmly rooted in the Russian idiom and significantly influenced by Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff also displays his mature compositional style through his expressive capabilities, melodic giftedness, and exquisite tone painting. In recent decades, his compositions have enjoyed an increasingly prominent place within the canon of art music.

***Moment Musical: Adagio Sostenuto in D flat Major, Opus 16, No. 5* (1896)**
This is one of a series of six pieces for solo piano. Modeled on Schubert's work of the same name, Opus 16 evokes older musical forms such as the nocturne, song without words, barcarolle, theme and variation, and virtuoso étude. Written in great haste, Moments Musicaux nevertheless represents a movement towards more complex texture and virtuosity from Rachmaninoff's earlier works. The Adagio Sostenuto in D Flat Major is one of the more peaceful sections, intended to stand as moment of calm between the torrential waves of sound of the fourth and sixth pieces. Based on the barcarolle, a folk song idiom, the brief melody is structured in ternary form. Throughout the piece, the left hand plays a constant triplet figure, contrasting with the right hand chordal harmonies which are rich in suspensions.

Musicians

Eric Buchmann studied violin at the Conservatoire de Montréal and at the Université de Montréal where he earned a Bachelor of Music and a DESS degree. In 2001, he moved to Los Angeles to continue his studies at the University of Southern California. Two years later he joined the New World Symphony in Miami Beach where he played under the direction of Michael Tilson Thomas and many other music directors from all over the world.

His teachers include Sonia Jelinkova, Vladimir Landsman, JeanFrançois Rivest, William Preucil and Martin Chalifour. Eric Buchmann was appointed third chair of the First Violins of the Edmonton Symphony following auditions in April, 2006.

Born in Montréal, **Virginie Gagné** started to play the violin at age three, and entered the Conservatoire de Musique de Montréal at eight, where she later the Bachelor degree with honors both in violin and chamber music. She pursued her Master of Music studies at Rice University in Houston, Texas, with violin teacher Sergiu Luca.

Virginie has received several prizes in violin at the Montreal Symphony Orchestra Competition, the Canadian Music Competition and the Canada New Music Competition, among others. Beside violin, she won the first prize in Canada at the Desjardins International Development Competition, in the writing category.

Her orchestral experience includes concerts with les Violons du Roy, I Musici de Montréal, the Houston Symphony Orchestra and a one-year position, section first violin, with the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra. She was named to the first violins of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra following auditions, in April, 2006.

Sheila Laughton grew up in a large musical family in Ontario. After earning degrees in English Literature at Oberlin College and Music at the University of Toronto, Sheila assumed the position of Principal Cellist with the Atlantic Symphony Orchestra in Halifax. Since 1975 she has played Assistant Principal with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. Sheila has also performed two summer seasons with the Rome Opera Orchestra. She has appeared as a soloist and in chamber groups with the E.S.O.

Michael Massey was born in England and emigrated to Canada in 1957. His early piano studies with Jean-Pierre Vetter Edmonton were the prime influence in his development as a musician. Later studies at the University of Alberta earned him a Bachelor of Music degree and the gold medal in piano performance of the Western Board of Music. Following his graduation he spent two years studying at the Geneva Conservatory where he was unanimously awarded the "Premier Prix de Virtuosité" and performed as soloist with L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande.

Mr Massey's activities as a musician are many and varied. He has performed as a soloist and chamber musician throughout Canada, England and Scotland. As an accompanist he is particularly renowned for having worked with many major performing artists from Canada and abroad. He recently gave a course in

conducting at the University of Alberta where he has had a long association as a coach (vocal and chamber music) and accompanist. Mr Massey is currently part of the collaborative pianist team for the Music and Sound summer programme at the Banff Centre for the Arts where he coaches, conducts and accompanies young instrumentalists from around the world. Mr Massey has appeared frequently as soloist with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, and has also been its orchestral pianist for over thirty years. He is active as a piano teacher and has appeared on numerous occasions on CBC radio and television.

As a conductor, he has been deeply influenced by his studies in England in 1984 with George Hurst. Since 1977, he has been Music Director of the Edmonton Youth Orchestra programme. Mr Massey appears as guest conductor locally and abroad having worked with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra and the Scottish National Orchestra.

In 2002, for his contribution to the cultural life of the city, Mr Massey was inducted into the Edmonton Cultural Hall of Fame as an Artist–Builder and also received the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal.

Charles Pilon (not available)

Upcoming Events

September

15 Saturday, 8:00 pm
Faculty Recital
Tanya Prochazka, cello
Kathleen Corcoran, soprano
Milton Schlosser, piano
Works by Edvard Grieg
to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of his death
Admission: $20/adult, $15/senior, $10/student, available exclusively at the door

16 Sunday, 3:00 pm
Music at Convocation Hall I
Virginie Gagné, violin
Charles Pilon, viola
John Mahon, clarinet
Russell Whitehead, cornet
Kathryn Macintosh, trombone
Scott Whetham, tuba
Jeremy Spurgeon, piano
Brian Thurgood, percussion
"Into the Drawing Room" - Music for Salon Orchestra
Bizet's colourful *Carmen;* Sullivan's *Mikado Overture;* Rossini's *l'Invito;* Ernesto Nazareth *Eponina Waltz,* Haydn Wood *A Brown Bird Singing,* Amelia Woolford-Finden *steamy &! nbsp;* Kashmiri *Love Song.*
Admission: $20/adult, $15/senior, $10/student. Advance tickets are available exclusively at TIX on the Square, 420-1757

21 Friday, 8:00 pm
Music at Convocation Hall II
Martin Riseley, violin
Janet Scott Hoyt, piano
Works by Enesco, Fauré and Ravel
Admission: $20/adult, $15/senior, $10/student. Advance tickets are available exclusively at TIX on the Square, 420-1757

22 Saturday, 8:00 pm
Indian Music Ensemble
Sharmila Mathur, Director
Admission: $15/adult, $10/senior
Advance tickets are available exclusively at TIX on the Square, 420-1757

24 Monday, 8:00 pm
New Music Visiting Artist
Martijn Tellinga, Composer
Studio 27, Fine Arts Building
Admission: $20/adult, $15/senior, $10/student. Tickets are available exclusively at the door

30 Sunday, 3:00 pm
Music Alumni In Concert
Featuring Alexandra Munn (Professor Emerita), piano, and music alumni in a variety of chamber works with the University of Alberta Mixed Chorus Alumni Choir
Jamie Burns, Conductor
Admission: $15/adult; $10/stud/sen
Tickets are available at the door

30 Sunday, 8:00 pm
University Symphony Orchestra
Tanya Prochazka, Conductor
Tchaikovsky *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture*; Vivaldi *Concerto in G Major RV 413 for cello and strings*
Soloist: Kathleen Ludwig, cello
Stravinsky *The Firebird Suite*
1919 version
Admission: $15/adult, $10/stud/sen
Advance tickets are available exclusively at TIX on the Square, 420-1757

Please donate to Campus Food Bank

department of Music

Unless otherwise indicated
Convocation Hall, Arts Building, Univerrsityof Alberta
Advance tickets are available excelusively at Tix on the Square, 427-1757
Please note: All concerts and events are subject to change without notice. Please call 492-0601 to confirm concerts (after office hours a recorded message will inform you of any changes to our schedule).